

HONORING RECIPIENTS OF THE INNOVATION AND ADAPTATION RECOGNITION

HON. ADRIAN SMITH

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 17, 2020

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. Madam Speaker, today I honor nine individuals and businesses from Nebraska's Third District for receiving the Innovation and Adaptation Recognition.

Throughout the 75 counties of the Third District, Nebraskans know our communities grow when individuals step up: helping their neighbors, being involved, and creating opportunities for themselves and others.

In August, I called for nominations as part of a new initiative to acknowledge the contributions of individuals, organizations, and those who are working every day to improve and help their communities in the current environment.

Billy Estes is the Executive Director of the Midwest Theater of Scottsbluff. Midwest Theater's programming, which includes live performances, orchestras, and concerts, makes an important contribution to the cultural and social experiences of Nebraska's panhandle. When the Coronavirus pandemic reached western Nebraska, under the guidance of Mr. Estes, the Midwest Theater partnered with the Legacy of the Plains Museum to create the Skyview Drive-in Movie Theater. As the pandemic progressed, this venture proved so popular they outgrew their location and had to move to larger accommodations. Thanks to the creativity and leadership of Mr. Estes, in spite of the pandemic, the Midwest Theater has continued to thrive throughout 2020.

Grand Central Foods of York is owned by the Warren Thomas family. Mr. Thomas prides himself on his commitment to the York community. In "normal" times, Warren and the Grand Central Team are the first to ask where they can help with a project or how they can partner on events. The selflessness shown by everyone at Grand Central is a testament to the example of their ownership. Within a few days of the pandemic's arrival to York, Warren purchased a second grocery delivery van and expanded his service to the entire community. Because Warren believes in positive reinforcement, he encouraged his customers to wear a mask while in his store by offering a 5 percent discount on their purchases. He is an active member of many community groups, and his passion and commitment to his community are unmatched.

Alyssa Cochnar of Crete is the leader of Gold Star Martial Arts of Crete and Seward. At 26 years old, she is already a 5th-degree black belt, chief instructor, and co-owner of the martial arts facility. When directed health measures forced Gold Star to close in-person training classes, she spearheaded the process of creating online modules for her students to continue their training independently. Before long, she began offering Zoom Classes to provide her students with another safe and flexible option to continue their training and explore expanded experiences to encourage healthy eating habits and socialization while social distancing. I commend her positive attitude and commitment to an enriching educational experience for all her students, regardless of their experience level.

Bryce Jensen is the Director of the World Theatre of Kearney. His adaptability, especially during the pandemic, demonstrates his commitment to his community. Though the organization he operates, the World Theatre, was closed due to the pandemic, his outside of the box thinking inspired him to create, through strategic community collaborations, a World Theatre drive-in. Not only did this ensure the World Theatre could still bring respite to many during these trying times, but it restored a drive-in movie experience to the Kearney region, reminding many of the happy memories of their youth.

Kirk Zeller grew up in the community of Ravenna, Nebraska. After high school, he attended university and later worked in the medical field in Japan, Europe, and the United States. Eventually, Kirk returned to his hometown of Ravenna to raise his family. Since returning to Ravenna, he has turned the former Carnegie library into an entrepreneurship center, purchased a downtown building and renovated the upper story apartments, and recently directed a movie in Ravenna and Los Angeles which premiered at the Kearney World Theatre's drive-in, all while working on bringing new medical products to the market. He is a great story of returning to rural Nebraska and reinvesting in the community.

Dick Cochran of Kearney founded the non-profit Hot Meals USA in October 2017. By February 2018, he signed a memorandum of understanding with the American Red Cross to call on him for assistance in wildfires, floods, tornadoes, and other disasters. Every time Dick and Hot Meals USA are called upon, no less than 150 volunteers have supported the program. Since their inception, the policy has been to feed anyone, no questions asked. In just over three years, they have provided more than 155,000 meals across the country.

John McCoy is the CEO of Orthman Manufacturing of Lexington. He embraced the opportunity to help feed families who come from a poverty background in the Lexington area. When he first brought Hot Meals USA to the community, Orthman Manufacturing partnered with the Lexington Community Foundation and others to provide over 1,000 hot meals weekly to families. He then made feeding the community a priority as he and his employees took the lead to distribute USDA food boxes. When schools reopened in August, John was there for the community again. He donated 3,700 masks to Lexington Public Schools to make sure no student was unprepared for their school experience. John's actions represent his commitment to all members of the Lexington community.

Anthony May of Hastings is an entrepreneur. When the pandemic forced the taproom of Steeple Brewery Anthony co-owns to close, he quickly responded. Collaborating with Wave Pizza Company, the brewery's restaurant partner, he developed a community delivery program, which eventually offered their products to 21 communities in south-central Nebraska. This innovative program ensured many Nebraskans, whose communities either do not have a grocery store or now lacked a local place to eat due to the pandemic restrictions, had ready access to an easy to use food delivery program.

Matt Dennis and Michael Stepp are more than small-town business owners; they are master storytellers with a dream. What began as two friends making copper mugs in an old

shop has turned into an opportunity to reshape the meaning of community. When they purchased the building they now call Handlebend, their goal was to create a community of small businesses under one roof and welcome the community with open arms to come and enjoy a mule, coffee, or gather and with friends and family. Though the Coronavirus pandemic has caused the Handlebend community to adapt their approach, their dream to create an innovative experience for the O'Neill community continues.

I am proud to honor these individuals today, and I thank them for their many contributions to Nebraska.

RECOGNIZING LIEUTENANT COMMANDER CAMERON MASSEY

HON. JOE COURTNEY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 17, 2020

Mr. COURTNEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Lieutenant Commander Cam Massey, United States Navy, on his service as a legislative fellow in my Washington, D.C. office this year. Cam has played a critical role this year supporting my work on the House Armed Services Committee and representing the proud Navy community in Eastern Connecticut.

As Chairman of the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Seapower and Projection Forces, I have the high honor of overseeing much of our nation's Navy, Marine Corps, and various Air Force programs. This year, as our subcommittee considered how best to fund critical shipbuilding programs, revitalize our nation's sealift, and Navy and Marine Corps readiness across the INDOPACOM, Cam provided critical insight and guidance into how our subcommittee could best provide the resources and platforms that our Sailors and Marines need to achieve mission success.

Cam has also seized the initiative in a variety of areas beyond naval affairs. He worked to craft an amendment to this year's NDAA that would prioritize the sourcing and processing of rare earth minerals from the United States and our allies to strengthen our national security supply chains. He has also served as the staff-lead for the Friends of Australia Caucus, of which I serve as co-chair, ensuring that the ties between our countries remain as strong as ever as we recently celebrated more than 100 years of mateship.

Cam's adaptability was put to a severe test this year with the onset of the COVID-19 global pandemic, which completely altered the normal operations of our subcommittee. Cam was able to work remotely, and performed all his assignments without a hitch.

Cam's work ethic, character, humor, intelligence, and first-hand experience when it comes to nuanced naval affairs made an immediate impact on my office and I know their absence will be felt with the same immediacy. Cam and his family have made tremendous sacrifices for our nation, traveling around the world with the fleet. They've uprooted their family nearly a dozen times in just as many years. We're grateful that they've landed close to Washington for the time being and thank them for always answering our nation's call without hesitation.